[Since different authors attribute variant functions to the ajwogo, jal yat and bareth, for information on these religious and magical practitioners in their various contexts see also categories 756, 793, and 754.]

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

773 THE COWS OF NYIKANG

The natives frequently speak of the "cows of Nyikang". This expression is used in two different meanings, one mythological and one real.

Once Nyikang caught a cow in the river in a fish-net. It had no ears or horns. This cow was the beginning of a sacred herd; if anyone touched them who was not of their attendants, he died. They live in the river and come out to feed at night. This herd was carried away; some say the Darvishes took them, while others affirm that it was the Turks. From the dung of this herd the "ashes of denying" were gained. The ashes were made by burning the dung of the sacred cattle. They are preserved at Wau and other villages dedicated to Nyikang, and are applied in ordeals, when cases of adultery are to be tried. When the woman has confessed, but the man denies, they take recourse to the "ashes of denying". *An old chief*, taking a spear in his hand, stands erect and offers the following prayer: "You Nyikang, the ashes are yours! If this man has not had intercourse with this woman, may he escape! But if he has had intercourse with the woman, may he die! If this woman accuses falsely, may she escape!" After this the chief takes some of the ashes on his hand and strikes the man with it. Then the one who has sworn falsely, will die.

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The other application of the term is to cows devoted to Nyikang by the king. Each year the king gives a steer and a cow to the villages in which the cows of Nyikang are kept. The male is killed and used for food. If any person not belonging to the ennobling families, eats of the meat of these animals, he becomes a servant of Nyikang, and must take up his residence in that village. The female is kept for breeding purposes. The *Kwe Ojiyi* (vide page 130) herd these cattle. The chief of these villages of Nyikang seems to be Wau. If an outsider tried to milk one of these cows, he would die.

956 SORCERY
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The third factor in the religion of the Shilluks is the *Ajwdjwl*, and what is connected with him; *Ajwdjwl* is the wiz, doctor or sorcerer; the word is probably derived from *jwgh* "God", and would then mean: "one who is dependent on God", or "who has to do with God". As his most prominent business is to procure rain, Europeans generally call him rain-maker. He is the mediator between the people and Nyikang; he leads the dances and prayers to Nyikang, and presides at the sacrificial ceremonies. He heals also sicknesses by administering charms. Sick people apply to him with the present of a sheep or goat, or even an ox; the animal is killed, and the contents of its stomach are laid on the sick person's body; or the skin of the animal is cut into strips and these are fastened below the knee of the priest. This is also applied as a protection against dangers on a journey. When in the day season the cattle are brought across the river, the sorcerer has to prepare charms to protect them from being seized by crocodiles. Besides he has to abide to particular ordinances, to kill

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F723 Shilluk F723

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a man by witchcraft, to prevent rain, and to cause the cattle to be barren. — There exist two kinds of sorcerers, the one whose functions are just mentioned, who plays an important and mostly beneficient rôle in public life and the official religion of the community, and another one whose doings are secret and who works for mischief. If this latter is convicted of his evil doings, he may be severely fined, or even sentenced to death. — Besides these the word *jal pyj* "man of medicine" is sometimes used; whether this is a synonym to *ajwâjo*, or whether it designates still a third class of "witch"-, or ordinary "doctor", I do not know.

When possessed by a spirit (or by *Jwok*?) the sorcerers become' ecstatic; SORCERY 781
the same seems to be the case with a newly elected king; here it seems to be the spirit of Nyikang, which falls on his followers, vide page 149.

The texts contain many mythological tales and allusions, which may in former MYTHOLOGY 973
times have formed part of the strictly religious belief of the people, but exist now merely as historical traditions, without having any active meaning to the present generation; this domain of their mental life is, however, not sufficiently known as yet to allow a decisive judgment. A reminiscence of sun-service is evident from 15, page 106. The Nile and fishes are populated by water-people, who in figure are partly like men, partly like crocodiles or fish. They had, in the past, many intercourse with men. — According to some older writers the spirits of the Nile are worshipped. They have their own cattle-herds, which live with them in and on the banks of the Nile. They often dive up from the water, chiefly in misty weather. When a cow is taken out of the river, it is placed under the protection of the Nile-spirits and the sun-god[1].

The Shilluks have two expressions which may be translated by "soul" or SOUL, SPIRIT 974
"spirit" of a living person: *wot* and *ojoy*; *wot* means "breath", and is the life-giving factor in man; the meaning of *ojoy* is "shadow" of a man, or "image", as even when looking into clear, still water. — The spirit of a dead person is called *anglo*; the word is derived from *ango* to kill; *anglo* probably means "one who kills", or "who is killed". The *anglo* is feared.

On the abode of deceased persons the Shilluks have but vague ideas; in one ABODE OF THE DECEASED 975
of the texts the dead are called "the people of the village of God", *jê yit jwok*. Whether they have a general belief in a life after death, is not known.

Islam does up to now not find much sympathy with the Shilluks. They RELIGION 779
prefer their own religion to that of foreigners. Only a few people who have for a longer time lived in close touch with Mohammedans, chiefly those who have served as soldiers, adopt the religion of Mohammed, or at least wear Mohammedan amulets besides their own charms. It is admirable that these people, Shilluks, Dinkas, Anyuaks, and Nuers, though having lived for centuries side 791
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[1] The traditionally relation to the cows of Nyikang, vide the preceding.

made on all times of sorrow and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in many areas.

Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, used to be identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approaches the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's sister, Nimire, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengwic, and also a belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is made to pun yaak, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

DIVINE KINGSHIP

Seligman suggests that Shilluk customs may have been derived from the Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Seligman and Brenzinger the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Seligman states that totem animals are often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them.(1) Most totems are animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married.(2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Rainmaker (Ajwong)

Ajwong means 'man of luck'. Such people are regarded as possessing certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community. People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the ajwong are believed to be due to their

(1) Seligman, The Shilluk, 1923, p.59.
(2) Ibid.

4:Shilluk E-4 (no date) 1952 F321 Shilluk F321

periodic possession by the spirit of the early Shilluk kings. The guardians of the shrines of Nyikang may or may not be nyanga, for mere connection with a shrine does not automatically make a man an nyanga.

According to Seligman when a man becomes an nyanga he becomes ill and has dreams. On consulting one who is already in the profession, he is told that he has in him a spirit of one of the early kings. Special ceremonies are performed, the habits and skills marking an nyanga are acquired, and the man begins to practise in his professional capacity. The power is frequently hereditary and a son or daughter or even a remote relation may become possessed. All soothsayers live outside towns whether they are male or female. According to Seligman an nyanga marries once and others beget children for him.[1] They soothsayers are specialists in some branch of magic but some have general powers. Some of the more usual performed by them are: to give safety on a journey, to bring success in hunting, to bring victory in war, and to detect those who will be killed in a fight and forestall their deaths. They are believed to have the power of curing diseases and also to kill by magic. The soothsayers are essential to the community as diviners and they have the ability to ward off evil spirits and bad magic. Every village or nyanga possesses a 'guard of luck', which is a gourd with a handle upon which is an iron head. The gourd is ornamented and some grain is put in it. When it is shaken the grain rattles and that is presumed to be luck talking. The gourd is kept in the nyanga's house and is consulted for purposes of divination.[2]

Many of the soothsayers exert a powerful influence over the people and, in consequence of the fees they receive, are usually prosperous.

The Jalpet

The jalpet, 'the man of hate', is a sorcerer dealing essentially in bad magic, as opposed to the good magic of the nyanga. The jalpet is greatly feared. He works in secret at night so that the Shilluk are never sure who is a jalpet, though they will kill anyone whom they suspect of practising sorcery.

The jalpet is thought of as being a committed soul, an ogre, he should be drowned at birth. The father alone has the power to save his son. When a sorcerer has reached maturity he cannot be killed openly unless the people of his village determine to rid themselves of the evil they believe him to be causing. The power is not considered to be hereditary. The sorcerer, in practising his evil arts, uses parts of his victim's body or things closely connected with him. He makes mud villages and pretends them to be huts and he believed by their means to destroy the persons they represent. A sorcerer may cause sickness, bring misfortune by ruining crops, by causing cattle to go barren and no birth. Sometimes such sorcery children in a large family and certain accidents and deaths may be caused by their machinations. The burns of the sorcerer's corpse is considered to be one of the successful and the prosperous. He therefore endeavours to injure.

[1] Seligman, Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, 1932, p. 95.
[2] Hofmayr, S.A.J., 1908, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 116.

S:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 F215 Shilluk F215

mischievous and aggressive, but also a trickster who (vainly) attempts to deceive his father for his own advantage.' Westermann[1] quotes a text in which Nyikang commends a liar (perhaps a liverand jester), and another in which it is made clear that it was Dak's cunning which resulted in the catching of one of the creatures, described as a *jook*, with which the Shilluk kingdom was originally built up. The traditions of the Shilluk kings recorded by Hofmayr give details of their duplicity and cunning, their military prowess, and their cruelty and caprice. In this way they are approximated to God for them, and particularly intelligence and knowledge, are qualities by which a man manifests the power of God in him. The very nature of the election to the Shilluk kingship gives an advantage to the clever, as well as to the ruthless and brave, and the office must constantly have offered opportunities for intrigue and homicide. These features of 'divine kingship' tend to be somewhat elided in European accounts of the sacred character of the office, but some of the interest of the Shilluk kingship lies in the fact that the sort of sacredness it represents is little associated with an ethical code. Nyikang and the kings, along with God, are nevertheless for the Shilluk the sanctions for the customary rules and norms of behaviour. Thus the mention for the customary moral order of Shilluk society is not conceived primarily in ethical terms, but as a manifestation of successful power and intelligence. So the test of kingship is success in the widest sense, and an unsuccessful king is soon killed by his rivals or dispossessed of by his ministers.[2]

Social Values: Cleverness and Success

That intelligence and success are attributed to the favour of God may be seen in other ways. Spirits, or those who are divinely inspired, are shown in Shilluk stories to be both clever and successful. They know more than others, and they can turn this knowledge to their own advantage. The Shilluk *ajwogo* (diviners), whose power is said to come from *jook*, are such people, and Oyler says of them that 'the Shilluks think of the witch-doctors or medicine men as good, not because their lives are good, nor yet because their practice is good, but because they are looked upon as the channels through which unseen powers may be transmitted to man'.[3] They are personally prosperous because they are necessary, and they are necessary because they know better than ordinary men how to achieve success; such a divinely inspired person may therefore be approached for help in evading

[1] Westermann, 1912, p. 81. [2] 1912, p. 188.

[3] I have deliberately omitted any discussion of the killing of the Shilluk king, which by some authorities is said to be a ritual putting to death when the king's powers fail. The evidence for this is very confusing; in the records of the kings given by Hofmayr (1911), some clearly have died or been killed without ceremonial. It is difficult to reconcile this with the suggestion made by some authorities that the killing of the king is a ritual act performed to maintain the fertility and vitality of the land, cattle, and people, and that the ceremonial killing is believed to be essential for this, though misfortune for the whole land may have be attributed to some inadequacy in the funeral rites.

[4] Oyler, 1930.

9 Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 F223 Shilluk F223

some of the losers are mentioned during the ceremonies and others are added to their personal herds. One must, therefore, beg the question whether those portions alleged to be the right of the *reth* were ritual fees of this nature rather than ' fines ' as is so frequently stated. It is a question of interpretation, and I suggest that even though repressive action and the exaction of ' fines ' may have occurred, with the backing of foreign Governments, during the latter half of the last century and the early years of the present Administration, the payments were ritual in origin and concerned the *reth*'s ritual functions in society. The use of the word ' fine ' appears to me to be inaccurate.

Ritual of Purification for Homicide

As among other Nilotic peoples, a Shilluk who has killed another must perform certain rites to cleanse him from impurity which might otherwise affect his kinsmen. This process involves, first, the letting of blood, which is carried out by a magical expert (*ajwogi*)[1] who makes a small incision on his right shoulder with a spear. This is known as *tet dhom*. Secondly, a small sacrifice is made (usually a sheep), the object of which is to remove the curse of the dead man's spirit. As among the Nuer and Dinka, the killer is not expected to eat or drink until this ritual has been performed.

Accidental Killing

Accidental killing (*agwoy*) is apparently not regarded as a serious offence among the Shilluk, especially if the two parties are connected by kinship or by close association in one territory. Hofmayr says: ' Accidental killing requires only the sacrifice of an ox as a peace ceremony and no more.'[2] District records indicate that two head of cattle sometimes were paid. At the Shilluk Chiefs' Council in 1934 it is recorded that ' the Council do not know whether there is a definite law on this subject or not. The *reth* says that years ago it was two head of cattle, one to the relatives of the dead man, one to the *reth*. He himself suggests two head of cattle to go to the deceased's family. This is confirmed as law.' I do not think that any such fixed indemnity existed in the past, but that intention was recognized and accident accepted in mitigation of the offence. At any rate the indignation of the deceased's kinsmen would not be so acute, and they would be prepared to accept an indemnity less than that normally demanded for intentional homicide.

Bodily Injuries not causing Death

On the subject of bodily injuries less than death, the evidence is even less reliable than on homicide. It is evident that such injuries require the payment of compensation if retaliatory action is not to follow. At the same time it is perhaps surprising that among the Shilluk, unlike the Nuer and Dinka, there are no recognized injuries for which compensation is given on a definite scale. We know that ' for injury ' an immediate payment of one bull must be made as a guarantee of good faith. Subsequent settlement is made on a scale regulated by the severity of the ultimate damage and rising, in the case of blinding, to the same rate as for death. Apart from the problem of the *reth*'s intervention in matters of this sort, it may be assumed, in the absence of

amounts to eight cattle one of a small herd.

[1] *Ajwogi*: Hospital report on specialist. These persons are not comparable to the Nuer *Gaarnhomo*, such as the *Kwar kwar*, but to the possessors of spirits (*yiene kwath*). *Ajwogi* is a derivative of *Juok*, meaning God in Shilluk.

[2] Op. cit.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE EVIL EYE.

THE EVIL MEDICINE MAN.

BY REV. D. S. OYLER.

I. — THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE EVIL EYE.

To the animistic mind of the Shilluk, the occult powers are always near, and the fact that they can not be seen makes them none the less real. Around, about him everywhere are the spirits, and daily he comes in contact with people, who are the possessors of occult powers. They recognize five classes of people, who are in possession of hidden powers. They are:

The servants of the king, that is the people in whom is the spirit of one of the kings;
The beneficent medicine men or witch-doctors;
The malignant medicine men or witch-doctors;
The people with the power of the evil eye, and
The people possessed of the evil spirit.

Some say that the class of people with the power to cast the evil eye receive their power from the evil medicine men, and would class them together, but very few make that classification. However, in talking about the evil eye, it always brings up the subject of the malignant medicine men. The powers claimed for the two classes are very similar.

Many say, with good reason, that the people possessed of the evil spirit should not be so called, but that their affliction is merely a disease. We would call it insanity.

These articles do not exhaust the subjects, but a little has been gleaned from the contradictory tales of the Shilluks. Often the ideas of the natives

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

756 to encircle him with his legs. The medicine man then spits on his hands, and strikes the patient lightly. He then places his hands in the arm pits of the afflicted person, and proceeds to knead his whole body, and then concludes by stretching the patient's fingers. A chicken is then killed, put in a cooking vessel, and buried. A burning torch is then passed in circles about the head of the patient. Three highly pegs are then driven in the ground near his door, and the medicine man taking water in his hands blesses it, and sprinkles it on the ground by the pegs, and as he sprinkles it he prays: "Help my breast that the man may live. I have worked; the matter rests with you, you are God, it was you, who created, and the tree (medicine)."

Others add to the above by grinding up a bit of a certain plant, and giving it to the patient in water. Then grass is tied in little knots, and scattered on the road, and the patient is then put in a house, and a spear stuck up near his head to guard him.

757 The evil medicine men kill their own relatives first so as to inherit their
762 property.

Sometimes when the evil medicine man is old, he reforms and leaves
759 all his old practices, and hires his powers to help people. When they try
758 to help, they are very powerful. A story was told by different people, but none of them were eye witnesses of the cure, though they had it from a man who was present.

To begin the cure, two cows were paid. The patient was tied so he could not move, and laid on the ground. The medicine man then called his two big snakes, and when they came to him, he said: "You see the man, and the fee. Shall we help him? If you assent, go to him." The snakes went to the poor victim, and much to his terror crawled all over him, and they even went so far as to lick his face. The patient called loudly for help, and even wept. The medicine man called for water, and sprinkled it on the patient, after he had blessed it, and he announced that the patient was cured.

759 Another reformed malignant medicine man, had such power over a cer-
761 tain bit of water that if a person fished in it without permission, some mishap would ever take him. The required permission would be given when the fisherman promised to give as a fee the first fish taken, and

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 F323 Shillok F323

another had such power over the animals in a certain district that it was easy to get safe to hunt without his blessing, which was given by spitting on the hunter and his dogs. If that blessing was not obtained, the hunter would be devoured by lions.

Sometimes an evil medicine man may have the power of the evil eye as well, and then he is exceedingly strong. While most of the natives say that the people with the evil eye, and the evil medicine men are entirely separate some connection must exist, for if a man begins to talk about one he invariably brings in some thing about the other, and it is not always easy to know which he is talking about. One of the chief differences in the method of working is that with one, merely to look on the victim is enough, but the other must get some means of contact.

As a class they accept the reputation given them, and try to live up to it. They are classed against, and they seek to repay in kind. Shunned as evil they come to believe in the powers ascribed to them. Many of the miracles accomplished by their power follow so long after the invocation of the power, that a less superstitious race would not look upon it as a result of their power.

Through superstition the evil medicine man is a power among the Shilloks. Thoughts of his power may cast a gloom over the most festive occasion, and at night when the world is peopled by the spirits of their fancies, the evil medicine man prowls about. The hooting of an owl or unusual tapping sounds caused by the wind bring a thrill of dread to the heart of the Shillok, which can not be dispelled by the bright light of day.

D. N. Oyler.